



North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Michael F. Easley, Governor

William G. Ross Jr., Secretary

April 26, 2004

Dear Friends:

I am very pleased to send you a copy of "A Conceptual Plan for North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea Trail – Falls Lake Dam to Cedar Island." We are excited that this plan will serve as a guide for local governments, volunteers and state agencies in developing segments of North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MST).

I appreciate your participation in the working groups that have met over the past 2 years. Your hard work, and the information you have shared, has paid off in the form of this conceptual plan for a routing of the MST through Eastern North Carolina. Now it is time to move forward with the next step in making this trail a reality.

In order to advance the project, I feel it is imperative that we develop a working relationship between all the stakeholders. To that end, I am announcing the formation of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail East Task Force comprised of representatives from the departments of Environment and Natural Resources, Transportation and Commerce, as well as representatives from the local communities along the proposed trail corridor. The mission of this task force will be to develop strategies to assist local governments and volunteers to plan, acquire, construct and manage segments of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail.

Your patience in this rather lengthy process is appreciated. In order to produce a document that addressed all the various concerns and issues identified in the public meetings, we wanted to take the necessary time and develop realistic steps to foster success in implementing the plan. I want to reiterate that this plan is only the first step in a long journey to make this trail a reality. Your continued participation is vital to the success of the project.

Please take time to review this Conceptual Plan and formulate your questions and comments. The MSTE task force will be organizing some meetings in the near future for you to voice your opinions.

Sincerely,

Bill

William G. Ross, Jr.

P.S. At my request, Sig Hutchinson was kind enough to share his views about the keys to success for this eastern third of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail. Please review and comment on Sig's suggestions!

Attachment: March 22, 2004 Letter from Sig Hutchinson

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